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CHOPIN.

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CHOPIN: AS REVEALED BY EXTRACTS FROM HIS DIARY

BY
COUNT STANISLAS TARNOWSKI

Translated from Polish by
NATALIE JANOTHA

Edited by J. T. TANQUERAY

With Eight Portraits.

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TO

JOHN OLIVER HOBBES

(MRS. CRAIGIE)

Who studied music with a pupil of Chopin, and helped to further with her Art, the Master's works.

CHOPIN

BY

COUNT STANISLAS TARNOWSKI

THIS sketch was intended for one of a course of public lectures, which took place in Cracow, in 1871, for the benefit of poor students attached to the University. The notes on Chopin were written by special request and under the direction of Princess Marceline Czartoryska. From her the author received many interesting details as well as letters written by Chopin, in which the master alludes to many of his compositions as well as the conditions under which they were written

During twenty years much has been said in and out of print concerning the virtuoso's style and inspirations, but for intimate knowledge of its subject Count Stanislas Tarnowski's manuscript retains all its original value. When the following particulars were given as a lecture, Princess Marceline Czartoryska played each morceau mentioned in the sketch, thus affording the privileged audiences delightful and much appreciated object lessons on the "exquisite intricacies" of Chopin as man and musician. Three gifted Poles—Mickiewicz, Krasinski and Slowacki—who was poetically said to carry an Æolian harp within his breast—preceded Chopin as a tangled trinity of sweet singers. "Divided" Poland was to know a fourth and a greater, however, in the author of so many immortal melodies; Chopin takes up the harp of life, and smites it mightily indeed—whether it be with the inexpressible melancholy and forlorn wailings of a Funeral March or the reckless abandon of a Tarantella. In fact, Chopin only can give to foreigners the idea of that inspiration,

original, melancholy, homely and patriotic, which is the feature of Polish poetry, because his music is enlivened by that same inspiration and impressed by it, and is, as it were, a fulfilment and a translation of that poetry.

Therefore, in the history of our country, subsequent to the partition, his music has its great significance and merit. It represents to the outside world the leading spirit of our natures, and so thoroughly represents it, that it has acquired glory for itself and for us, and a citizenship in the realm of music, which we did not possess before; it contains in itself the essence and expression of the spirit which created our poetry.

There is a likeness between Chopin and contemporary poets, there is a similarity of feeling and inspiration, there are even some similarities of disposition, and as truly the first Polish musician, and even, until now, the only really great one, he has conquered for us an honourable position in the realm of art, he holds a special claim on our remembrance and

gratitude. And if to this, be added the charm of a nature strangely noble and refined, with beautiful and exalted feelings, with a rich and vivid imagination, with quite an uncommon intelligence, with rare tenderness to suffering in others, one discovers elements that go to make one of the most enchanting and interesting personalities of contemporary Poland. The sympathy which surrounds him, which makes nothing that refers to him uninteresting, may encourage one who, though having no right to appraise his art and his musical position, has chanced upon a few details concerning him which are not generally known—some traces of his sentiments and impressions preserved in letters or notes, or sketched carelessly on the pages of albums. It will not be an estimation of the great musician, neither will it be in the slightest degree a sketch of the life and personality of the man, but it may be an addition of a few details worthy of preservation in the collection of these biographies of Chopin which will some day complete the whole picture of his life and

work—a picture for which his glory and our good fame have already waited too long!

"When the war was ended, and Cesar was banished, when all the walls were overhung with portraits of Blücher and Wellington, with the inscription 'Salvatoribus mundi,'" says De Musset in his psychologically clear diagnosis of the disease of the century ("Confession d'un enfant du siècle," Chap. II.), "Then on all those ruins arose a new generation mournful and pensive. Each of its children had in its veins that warm blood which was flowing in streams over the whole world, and each dreamt of the snows of Moscow and the sands of Egypt, each had in its mind a whole world of dreams, of thoughts and yearnings, and now whatever they gazed upon, up to heaven or on earth, everywhere, all was empty—grown up people were full of doubts; young people contradicted everything; the poets sang despairingly: a terrible hopelessness, like the plague, began to sweep over the world."

The French poet thus explains the sickliness of his generation and his own disposition. In

Poland, where the political and intellectual situation was far worse, it is not surprising that the over-sensitive and irritable Poles developed an almost diseased melancholy. Among these beings, sick it may be, because sorrowful unto death, Chopin stands out as possessing one of the most refined and delicate of organisations; a nature so complicated is seldom found even in an age of complicated subtleties. To sensitiveness, tenderness and a feminine delicacy of nerves he united a child-like gaiety and humour. It is true that his moments of humour and forgetfulness never lasted long, as in some of the Mazourkas, where the sincere, almost rude gaiety, ends in the more intense despondency.

A person who lived many years in close friendship with him, among other remembrances of Chopin, says, however, that:

"He was a most perfect and most amusing mimic. Without any disguise, without any of the resources used by actors on the stage, in one moment he could change his features, movements, and stature to that extent that the best

friends could not recognise him, and celebrated artists like Boccage and Mme. Dorval declared that they never have seen such a gift of mimicry and such an inborn talent for comic acting."

"He had a cheerful mind but a sad heart," says another of his friends.

Strangely reserved in his sentiments, fearing to degrade them by outward display, shy and solitary, he did not care for publicity, and nothing was so odious to him as public performance and applause. To have to give a concert was a misfortune to which he yielded only under the greatest pressure. He possessed only so much pride as is required to be dignified; he knew his value as an artist, but he did not over-rate it, and he willingly acknowledged and admired the merit of others. He was so courteous, pleasant and well-bred, that even his excited nerves, physical pain, sudden antipathies—from which he suffered often, and at first sight, like all nervous natures—did not overrule his charm in social intercourse. Stupidity, however, made him

exceedingly impatient, and, above all, pupils of limited and slow understanding. Sometimes "leaflets of music and even disagreeable words flew in the air, that delicate, feminine, small hand broke lead pencils, and even chairs, like reeds; but when he saw tears in the eyes of the unfortunate pupil he subdued his anger instantly, and his kindness sought means to alleviate the pain he had given." He was in the highest degree superstitious, and the numbers seven, thirteen, Fridays and Mondays had a great significance for him.

Chopin was—almost to excess—careful about his toilet. He never had a suit made to please him, and, before every concert, several evening coats were ordered at different tailors; all were tried, but none were ever found to fit. At the last moment before appearing the master would seize the coat of his friend and pupil Guttmann, twice his size and too long for him, and appear in it. His love of exquisite manners and breeding was, it may be, pushed too far, but he was disgusted and irritated by those artists who laid claim to genius on the

strength of neglected dress and disordered hair.

When composing he could never decide on the final form in which to express his thought. He would call in a friend, frequently a child, and play all the phrases from which one was to be chosen; relying on its natural instinct, and selecting that phrase which the child thought the prettiest.

Whatever money he had was always dispensed in doing good or in giving pleasure. He was at times peevish during pain or illness, but usually courageous and resigned. He had an amusing, sometimes a sarcastic wit, a capacity for sacrifice—a feminine soul longing more to love than to be loved. To all this he added the gift of genius, most fatal to his individual happiness. From childhood upwards he spent the day amongst musical sounds and tones, or when he did not actually hear them he thought of them, recalled them, created new ones in his imagination and dreamt of them in the night.

What was Chopin in his earliest youth in

Warsaw? Inclined to a gentle sadness, such as dreaming gives, not the heavy and bitter one, left by the reality and experience of life. One of his earlier works—the ninth in order, a Nocturne (No. 1)—is a sufficiently true and characteristic picture of that disposition and at the same time of the nature of his talent. This talent was developed under the influence of Field, who furnished him forms as suitable to him as the Nocturne. Technical education, the knowledge of composition, he practically took from the music of Hummel. "He studied from the very best models," Schumann says, "he took from Beethoven temerity and inspiration, from Schubert tenderness of feeling, from Field manual dexterity," and the originality of his music that makes it different from all others was apparent in his very first compositions.

Robert Schumann relates, in his writings about "Music and Musicians," that at one of the gatherings of a certain circle of youthful enthusiasts of music in Leipsic one of their members, pale and breathless, threw some

music on the table and exclaimed, "Hats off, gentlemen! A new genius!" and began to play. These were the variations on the theme of "Don Juan," and when they ended none of those connoisseurs knew whose they were. "They are not Beethoven's, nor Schubert's, and if not their's, then, who can compose like that? On the title page stood "La Ci darem la mano. Varie pour le piano, par Fr. Chopin. Op. 2." A second work! Their astonishment was without limits. "Something good at last! Chopin! Who is he? A genius." Schumann describes the impression, he says that he fancied he heard Leporello's loud laughter and the metallic voice of Zerlina, that he saw Don Juan's white mantle, and the pouting Masetto's figure, and he concludes with these words—"that he bows before such an art, before such a genius, before such a master."

Not everyone, however accepted him with such enthusiasm. Stern critics knitted their brows at his concerts, wrote in musical papers that his compositions were only worthy to be torn up and thrown into the fire. Schumann

answered that one bar of Chopin was worth more than whole years of the musical papers. He writes this concerning the two Concertos (op. 11 and 21) written in Warsaw, also some mazourkas, like the Polonaise, for piano and 'cello (op. 3), and though, even nowadays, it seems that musicians do not share the enthusiasm of Schumann, and do not include the concertos amongst his most beautiful inspirations and most perfect works, yet they do not deny that the talent which created them was most perfect. "He might not be a General in the great orchestral army, but had under him a small regiment; still, in this regiment everyone obeys him and does everything he commands, down to the private!" *Schumann.*

And so, with fully-developed talent, with a reputation made in Warsaw, with self-confidence imbibed more from the depth of his own feeling than from outsiders, with a first indistinct love in his heart, and with that consumptive disposition feared in his childhood, and which with years became more threatening, so that a less rigorous climate was found

necessary, young Chopin went abroad to gain perfection in his art, and to regain his health, not foreseeing that he would never return to Warsaw.

He left with a light heart, full of dreams of fame and happiness. "I have only twenty kreuzers in my pockets," he writes in his pocket book, "and it seems to me that I am richer than Arthur Potocki, whom I met only a moment ago."

Alas! this calm was not to last, and his departure was the beginning of all the worries of his life. On this decisive journey Chopin carried a little pocket-book, a kind of album, in which he often carelessly recorded the different accidents that happened to him, and various thoughts that had passed through his mind. On the first page there is a sketch—a view of Warsaw—the column of Sigismund by moonlight, and an open space in the Cracovian suburb. Then a piece of paper, yellow and crushed, on which is written in a bold handwriting "On vous adore," and signed "George." These two pages of the album are like two symbols in the history of his life.

Warsaw is the beginning—the free, peaceful and happy period of life; the other, the storms and sorrows of later years. Warsaw is the thought and the love of his country; the other one, a remembrance of another love, which poured so much bitterness into his life. All this preying upon a tragic nature, that state bordering on despair which, as has been said, is perceptible throughout his compositions. Such a nature was possibly predestined never to attain equanimity; yet if Chopin had had other surroundings, if he had remained in his country and the ordinary ways of life, in course of time his constitution might have become healthier, his talent would have developed more peacefully, more classically, with more virility; but thrown suddenly out of gear as it was, he became more and more unbalanced, and his talent developed in the direction of effeminate tenderness and sentimentality. This disposition appears soon after his departure from Warsaw.

"To-day it was beautiful in the Prater"

NATALIE JANOTHA.

(writes Chopin with a lead pencil in his album at Vienna). A great number of people that did not concern me at all. I admired the green; the perfume of the spring; and this innocence in nature reminded me of my feelings in childhood. A storm gathered: I returned. There was no storm, only a sadness seized me. Why? Even music does not gladden me to-day; it is late, yet I do not want to go to sleep; I do not know what ails me; and I have already begun the third little cross!"*

What ailed him? Everything appeared propitious in Vienna. Acquaintances in the artistic world were made; fame awaited him. He lacked nothing, only he had yearnings, as a very sensitive nature has, and, like one who has no control over himself, he would like to possess what he had left at home, as there he had dreamt of the beauties of foreign lands, and of that artistic appreciation which he expected from it.

"The programmes and papers have already advertised my concert, which is to come off in

* For every ten years one cross.

two days; and it concerns me as little as if it were never to be. I do not listen to compliments, which always seem to me silly. I want to die, and then, again, I wish to see my parents. Her picture stands before my eyes; it seems to me that I do not love her any more, and yet she does not leave my mind. Everything that I saw abroad, until now, impresses me as being old, unendurable, and only makes me sigh for home, for those happy days which I knew not how to prize. What formerly seemed to me great, seems common-place now; what formerly seemed common-place, seems impossible to-day, too great, too high. Here the people are not mine; they are good, but they are good from habit; they do everything too tamely, in a mediocre fashion which kills me.

"I should not even wish to feel mediocrity. I feel strange, I am sad, I cannot help myself. Why am I alone?"

What was Chopin doing during the year 1831? Did he curse his delicate feminine hand, that could not carry a rifle, his weak

chest that did not permit him to enlist? The scarce and indefinite traces of his disposition cause us to think so. What he did feel, when the war was over, when he received news of the capture of Warsaw, is revealed in that same small album. Pain, despair, curses, blasphemies, tears, all appear at once, and most terrible of all, anxiety and suspense. A cruel torment to the hardest natures, to the tender and nervous something tending towards madness. Amidst all tears and lamentations over Poland, over beloved Warsaw; amidst all complaints of God and to God, there mixes and returns like a refrain this racking question: What has become of his father, his mother and his sisters. . . .

"The suburbs are burned and stormed. John Willy certainly fell on the walls. I see Marcel imprisoned; dear Sowinski in the hands of those rascals; Paszkiewicz, a dog from Mohilew, seizes the seat of the first monarch of Europe. Moscow rules the world. O God! Do you exist? You exist and do not avenge us. Have the Muscovites not yet committed

crimes enough for you, or are you yourself a Muscovite?"

This reminds one of Mickiewicz. "Thou art not the world's great Father, but its Tsar!" a strange mixture of feeling, thoughts and words, an unconscious one, as the "Improvisation" had not yet appeared.

And then he turns to his beloved ones:—

"My poor father! My dearest ones! Perhaps they hunger. Maybe he has not anything to buy bread for mother? Perhaps my sisters have fallen victims to the fury of the Muscovite soldiers? O father, is this the consolation of your old age? Mother, poor suffering mother, is it for this you outlived your daughter?"

The first thought that comes to his mind is as devout as a woman's: the thought of those whom he had loved and lost, of his dead sister:

"Ah! did they respect her grave? Trodden upon; thousands of other corpses decked her tomb."

"What happened to her? Where is she?

Poverty-stricken, perhaps in the hands of the Muscovites; a Muscovite strangles her, murders her. Ah, my life! Here am I alone. Come to me. I wipe away my tears; will heal your wounds of the present by recalling the past. When there were no Muscovites; then when only a few Muscovites tried to please you most ardently, and you made fun of them because I was there. . . . Hast thou a mother? and such an angry one, and I have such a good one. . . . Yet perhaps already I have none. Perhaps the Muscovite killed her, murdered her. . . . the sisters unconscious do not submit. . . . father in despair knows not how to help."

"And I here unoccupied! And I am here with empty hands! Sometimes only I groan, suffer and despair at the piano! O God, move the earth, that it may swallow the humanity of this century! May the most cruel torture fall upon the French, that they did not come to our aid."

All this is reflected in one of his musical creations, the Prelude No. 24, apparently a

small and insignificant one, but one of the most despairing and one of the most characteristic.

In this state, verging on madness, ever returning to one thought, almost without consciousness, among visions and forms supplied by the memory of former impressions, sentiments or incidents, we find Chopin still in Stuttgart after the taking of Warsaw. One night, going to sleep, he meditates deeply why he goes without horror to a bed in which, may be, more than one human being has lain dead. "More than one corpse, perhaps, has lain in this bed in which I go to rest, and it does not cause me any aversion to-day. In what is a corpse worse than myself? A corpse, like me, knows nothing about father, mother, sisters, about Titus (Woyciecbowski, the dearest friend of Chopin): a corpse has no beloved, cannot talk in his own language with those around him; a corpse is as pale as myself; a corpse is as cold as I am cold now about everything."

The complacency with which he compares

himself to a corpse, this forcing of comparisons to their farthest consequences, is a curious phenomenon of this state, in which despair having arrived at its limit passes almost into hallucination. And then again, a strange parallel: Mickiewicz, after the sorrows and disappointments of his first love, under the influences of despair, considers himself morally dead, and identifies himself with a ghost; Chopin, under the influence of despair, nearly identifies himself with a corpse. Chopin further philosophises on the same theme, with the same mathematical precision as Hamlet when he acts the madman:—

"The clocks from the tower of Stuttgart strike the hour in the night. How many become corpses at this moment in the world? Mothers are lost to children, children to mothers. . . . How much sorrow at this moment over the corpses, and how much consolation! Virtue and vice are the same, they are sisters when corpses. It seems that death is the best action of a human being. . . and what is the worst? Birth as being just the

contrary to the good action, therefore I am justified in being angry at having come into this world. Why do we live such a miserable life that devours us and is only for the purpose of making corpses?"

This is like that despairing wish of Job: "Oh, that I were not born . . . . who go from my mother's womb to the grave." And then he returns again to his mania, to that corpse:

"What can anyone derive from my existence? I am no use to humanity because I have no round cheeks and calves. Neither has a corpse calves, therefore nothing is wanting in me towards a mathematical brotherhood with death."

Then again his memory reverts to the past:

"Did she love me, or did she only pretend? This is a guess. . . . yes, no; yes, no; yes. . . . finger against finger. Does she love me? . . . . She certainly loves me. May she do what she likes?"

In this state approaching madness the real suffering declares itself:

COUNT STANISLAS TARNOWSKI.

Photo by Henner, Lwow.

"Father! mother! where are you? May be corpses. May be the Muscovite did this trick to me. . . . Oh! wait! wait!! But tears? They have not flowed for so long! Oh, it is long, a long time since I could cry. How well I feel, how sad! Well, and sad? if sad, then it is not well? Yet it is pleasant! It is a strange state, but a corpse is just the same, feels well and not well at the same time. Passes the happier life and feels well, is sorry to leave the past one and is sad. It must feel just as I do when I stopped crying. It was probably a momentary expiration of my feelings, my heart died in me a moment. Oh! why not for ever! Perhaps this would make me suffer less. Alone! alone!! It is impossible to describe my loneliness. Scarcely can feeling bear it."

There is one musical creation which renders this disposition as truly and precisely as a photograph, wherein one hears this monotonous, unbroken stubbornness of monomania, the continual return to one thought and the dumb

calm tone of a nearly stupefied despair. This is Prelude No. 2.

Such a state cannot last long. Either it will lead to utter madness or it must end—its mention here gives proof to what a pitch the disease of this nature attained under the influence of suffering. Fortunately it lasted but a short time; after this terrible sojourn in Stuttgart we find Chopin in Paris. He could not return home. The term of his passport had expired, there could be no question of renewing it or of getting another; the prolongation of the former one alone might produce results fatal to him, and so this seemingly small circumstance made an exile of him for the rest of his life.

Very soon after his arrival in Paris, Chopin was known throughout Europe. It seems that his musical fame did not arouse great sympathy or enthusiasm amongst the Poles, though he had many connections among them, and in this private capacity he was so kindly, friendly and simple that he was often seen in Polish houses, for whole evenings playing mazourkas and valses to dance to. The "Great Master"

was ready to act as a simple musician to give pleasure to others, especially to his countrymen, whose friend and colleague he felt himself to be. He was not closely acquainted with Mickiewicz; Julius Slowacki, with a somewhat amusing disdain, laughs at the nervous, sickly music of Chopin, and is angry at his own physical likeness to Chopin; he ridicules a young lady of whom he had heard that when she was disdained by him, she announced her intention of being wedded to Chopin, "because he looks like me." (The published accounts since prove that Slowacki was completely mistaken. The heroine of his poem, "In Switzerland," Mary K., did not love *him* but Chopin, from her earliest youth, though she did not marry him in consequence of the opposition of her father.) Chopin was also vexed at the likeness and did not like to be reminded of it.

Chopin's position amongst the emigrants among whom he always included himself, and who considered him one of their chief stars, was a good one, and his position in the French and artistic world, even in the world of fashion

and in salons that gave the tone to society, was very brilliant. This was the great epoch of his musical activity; but in general the opinion prevails now among musicians, that his talent, not only free but independent in smaller and narrower musical forms, did not rise to the highest. For some reason they praise his concertos and his sonatas less than his mazourkas, nocturnes, preludes, studies, ballads and polonaises. It is owing to the fact that musicians look upon Chopin as we ought to look upon a lyric poet of great feeling and inspiration, but whose imagination is not mighty and deep enough to conceive and execute an epic or tragedy as well as a poetical romance or a lyric.

Leaving to the so-called educated critics the final verdict as to Chopin's position among the great composers of the world, it will be sufficient to state here that all unanimously acknowledged in him a tenderness of feeling not possessed by any composer; the entire originality and individuality; and, to sum up, the most fascinating of Polish characteristics.

Through great intensity and individuality of feeling, he was able to express his ideas with such precision, that they became almost material; a curious proof of this gift is, that Chopin could express individual characteristics on the piano. Just as there was formerly a well-known fashion of describing dispositions in so-called "portraits" which gave to ready wits a scope for parading their knowledge of people and their sharpness of observation, so he often amused himself by playing such musical portraits. He illustrated in this way the characters of people present in a room, and so clearly and delicately that the listeners could always guess correctly who was intended.

During the time of Chopin's greatest brilliancy and popularity, in the year 1835, he once played his musical portraits in a certain Polish salon, where the three daughters of the house were the stars of the evening, in all splendour of beauty and power. After a few portraits had been extemporised, one of these ladies (Mme. Delphine Potocka) demanded hers. Chopin, in reply, drew her shawl from her

shoulders, threw it on the keyboard, and began to play, implying in this way: firstly, that he knew the character of the brilliant and famous queen of fashion so well, that he was able to depict it; secondly, that the character and soul were hidden under the externals of mondaine, as his piano was under the shawl.

Not only did little improvisations invented for fun prove the power which Chopin possessed of imparting his music to the feeling as well as to the imagination, but this quality is more distinctly and brilliantly evident in his great compositions. Liszt, in his book about Chopin, sees too much, perhaps, when he finds in the polonaises traces of Polish civilisation and history, the charm, the grace and all the attributes of the soul of women, or the beautiful necks, and soft eyes of Oriental steeds, proud of their rich harness and of the rider in his coat of sable. But there is a truth in this exaggeration, namely, that Chopin was a colourist in music as Slowacki was in poetry, and when Liszt, speaking of the "Triumphant Polonaise," says that in it one sees in imagina-

tion the passing groups as proud and bold as the figures in Veronese's pictures, he is very near that impression which Chopin himself experienced. This Polonaise was written on his return from Spain in 1840, and the author's imagination was so powerfully excited, that when he finished it, he had that same night an absolute hallucination.

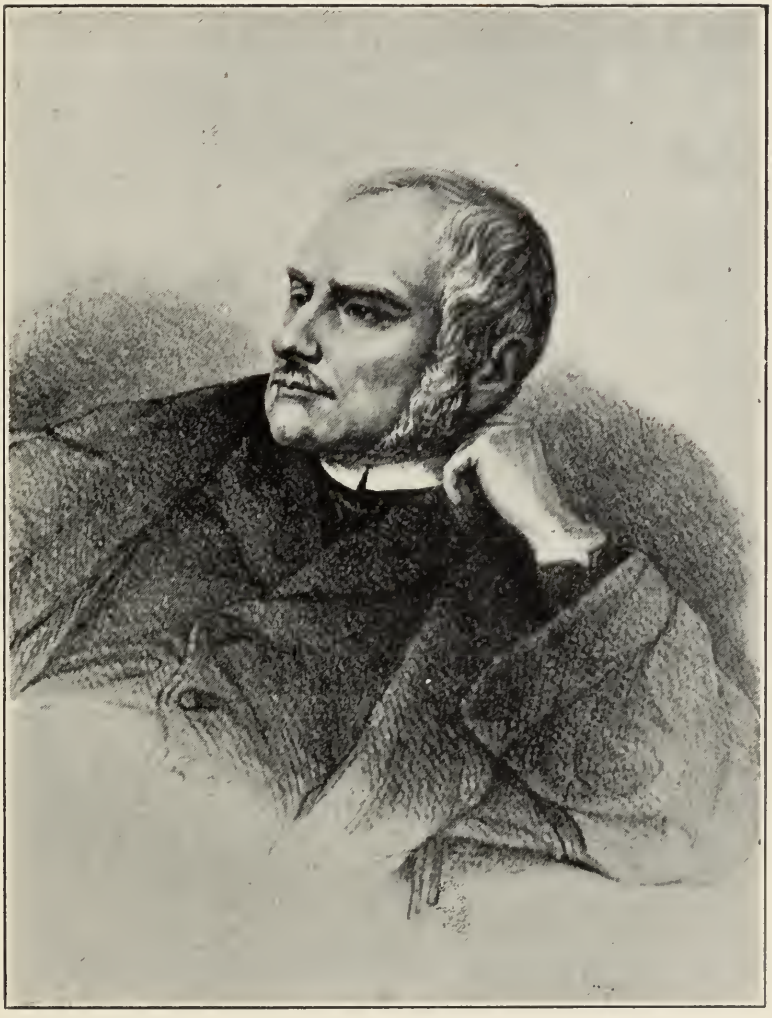
Alone in his room he was playing over the work, and when he finished, his nerves were in a very excited state. All at once it seemed to him that the folding doors opened, and through them entered a procession of warlike apparitions in national costumes, ladies in farthingales and stomachers, all filing solemnly past him, as if dancing to his music. And this filled him with such terror that he fled through another door and did not return that night.

Of a different character, but brighter and more powerful is his other polonaise, "The Polonaise Fantaisie." It is like a series of pictures, always new and changing: at first a soft buzzing, something like whispering, like some mysterious preparations; then the dis-

persed tones "join and unite in legions of chords" with the difference that what they play is not a sad song about a wandering soldier, but a strong battle song. It ends with a stifled modulation, like a dirge, and at the end the first *motif* returns, but whereas in the beginning it was played softly and mysteriously, it now sounds fortissimo, "so that the chords ring like brass trumpets." But we have one creation of Chopin entirely new in the world of music, namely, the mazourka. These are possibly the best known and the most sympathetic part of his work; even the least sympathetic of critics are agreed that they are masterpieces, and presented under a musical form that did not exist before his day.

It seems as if the peculiarly Polish form of the mazourka had become the natural expression of the one feeling which was the background of Chopin's disposition, and at the same time of Poland's, namely, sorrow.

Chopin's sorrow breaks forth freely in all his compositions: but it is a strange thing that when he composes under the influence of bitter-



KRASINSKI.

ness or despair he pours them into the most varied forms, excepting only that of the mazourka. This is a consecrated sanctuary of tender and melancholy dreams, and for this reason it became the strongest tie between the master and his countrymen; for when the exile and Master thought with home-sickness of his country, when he represented it to himself in all the "enchantment which distance lends to the view," then he wrote a mazourka, in which the nation found the two sentiments best known to it, the two strings of its heart—its patriotism and its grief!

It is difficult to choose out of their great number the one which would best represent the most perfect type of its kind. Individual taste has here such a large scope that a hard and fast definition becomes impossible, yet one can safely assert that to the most beautiful and most perfect types of a mournful mazourka belong the following: No. 2 (op. 7), No. 2 (op. 24), No. 3 (op. 7), and Nos. 1, 2 (op. 17).

But there is yet another group of mazourkas with a different character, and a very taking

and original one. These are gay almost to madness; but, alas! they are almost sadder than the melancholy ones; it is not gaiety, it is sorrow seeking to deaden itself for the moment. It is such a gaiety as that which "Matthew" illustrated in the music of Moniuszko or of Komorowski, who goes to the inn to dance because his farm is burnt, and his wife and children are dead. There is often despair in this gaiety; and such a reminiscence of peasant music, and its monotonous melody, such a buzz of primitive basses, such a scratching of primitive fiddles, such a chatter of different, mixed, rude voices, that it seems as if the ear heard the music from a well-known inn . . . only this inn by some miracle and magic becomes poetry, and the music art. Such is Mazourka No. 2, op. 56.

And Chopin's songs! Those songs that spread everywhere, so that we do not enquire or we forget who is their author. People sing them often, not knowing whose they are, and hear with surprise that they are singing Chopin. For example, that music to the words

by Mickiewicz, that renders his thoughts so truly and so tenderly, that the command: "Away from my memory, not yours nor my memory shall obey!" Or the pretty song of that girl, who would wish to be "the sun in the heavens." All these have an undoubted and vehement Polish character. But musicians see this Polish stamp on everything that proceeds from Chopin's brain, in compositions of a completely cosmopolitan nature and form. And he himself was convinced of this; sometimes when one of his French pupils played his compositions, and the listeners were surprised to find how well he rendered their spirit, Chopin is reported to have said, that he rendered everything, with the exception of the Polish character and Polish inspiration, and this not only in regard to mazourkas and polonaises, but in the concertos, nocturnes, and even in the studies.

Was not Liszt right when he said of the Funeral March that "only a Pole could have written it, for everything that would have been festive and heart-breaking in a funeral pageant

of a whole nation on seeing its own funeral, can be heard in the peals of those bells." Is it not as deep, as powerful as a sigh that proceeds from a million breasts at once, and would not Chopin have the right to say (Mickiewicz) that he also has suffered for millions?

When Chopin had reached the zenith of his fame, in the full development of his talent, a sudden and lasting misfortune befel him.

Many a time, certain likenesses of nature and talent between Chopin and Alfred de Musset were remarked upon, and undoubtedly there is a like tenderness, a like melancholy, a like delicacy of imagination, feeling, and lastly, a like sickliness; only Musset is a Chopin who wore himself out, and Chopin is a Musset, who like the ermine, took care not to come into contact with anything that might stain him.

The same fatal Delilah, "the woman with the sombre eye" of Musset, poisoned the life of Chopin; and he, like the former, with a broken heart, was forced to reproach her thus: "If I do not believe in tears, it is because I saw thee crying."

What was the history of this love affair? A very simple one. On the one side the offering of a whole soul, the concentration of a whole life, and at first a happiness and love without limits, possibly in the best of faith; but Chopin was nervous, irritable, disagreeable, unjust, jealous . . . . morally and physically suffering, and when ill, exacting, capricious, insufferable. . . . . When at length disillusion on his side set in—his happiness changed into disgust and chagrin. This love story lasted for many years, however, during which the lung disease which threatened Chopin grew more alarming.

The doctors recommended a southern climate, and there followed the journey to Spain, and the sojourn in the island of Majorca during the winter of 1839-40. Some details are preserved concerning this visit; Chopin was so ill that he could scarcely drag himself from the bed to the piano and back again; a stove he wanted to order from Marseilles, and a piano he obtained only after endless difficulties and delays, as the officials and the inhabitants of the town of Palma took both for

infernal machines brought down to blow up the town. Settled at first in some village or little town, Chopin was suddenly chased out of it. Disease of the lungs is considered in Majorca as infectious as cholera or the plague, and as no one would suffer the invalid in their house or vicinity an asylum was found with difficulty in a distant monastery, abandoned by the Carthusian monks, and called Valdemosa. This monastery was situated over a beautiful chasm overgrown with orange trees, but in spite of all the health of Chopin could not improve in such great discomfort and privation. Added to this, the winter was terrible, with forty days of uninterrupted rain, and sometimes snow; the state of the invalid seemed so precarious, that it was doubtful if he would ever return to France. Yet even here, and in such a state of health, he continued to compose. In this monastery were written the greater number of his preludes, and the monotonous rain, falling in drops at equal intervals from the roof to the window, inspired him with the mournful and beautiful Prelude No. 6, op. 28.

They returned from Majorca and from Spain. Chopin sick, worried and irritable, became less and less welcome to his friends. Means were sought to get rid of him, at first delicately, then more openly and rudely. He saw everything, felt everything, every prick of the pin, every humiliation. He remained faithful to his love, for he thought the fidelity and durability of such a union is its excuse and redemption; he thought that each would remain noble, dignified, and worthy of the other until they should part. He therefore bore everything, he ignored all rebuffs, all pain intentionally given, and he stayed.

Then a heroic remedy was adopted. A novel appeared under the title, "Lucretia Floriani." The plot was the story of a man of sympathetic and noble nature, but ailing, nervous, suspicious, proud, full of aristocratic instincts and ideas. Prince Charles is smitten as by lightning with love for Lucretia, a middle-aged woman, who has renounced the world and love, and lives for her children and good deeds; she is an artist of great celebrity, does not pretend

to be better than she is, and is certainly better than her fame. Charles' passion reveals itself through a sudden illness, when his life is in danger. Lucretia saves him, loves him, but foresees that this love will become torture to her, and therefore conceals it. But when Charles again falls into danger, she responds at last to his sentiments through self-sacrifice. It is strange how women of a certain age are so willing to veil feelings of this kind by self-sacrifice or maternal care! They do not love at all, but see that frail, weak, nervous being needs care, help, tenderness. This creates that incongruous mixture of a semi-maternal, and certainly not a natural love, that we meet with in many, and amongst others in Lucretia Floriani.

This love was the beginning of two months of unlimited happiness. After then Charles becomes capricious, unjust; he cannot understand Lucretia's keeping up her former artistic friendships; he becomes jealous. Every moment there are scenes, nervous attacks, outbursts of fury and despair, and then outbursts of love.

STOWACKI.

This worries and wears out Lucretia; but she suffers all and says nothing, for she has sacrificed herself for Charles' happiness. She will die, her children will be left orphans; he may kill her, torture her, but she will not complain; she will fulfill what she vowed to herself to do; that for which she sacrificed herself the day she accepted his love, and, after a few years of such torture, humiliated by jealousy, separated from her friends, having long ceased to love Charles, moreover enduring him only out of self-sacrifice, Lucretia actually dies, the powers of life, exhausted by continual sacrifice, cease, and the heroic heart is broken.

Charles was, as regards his good points, a striking portrait of Chopin; in his bad points he was a similarly striking caricature. How many other resemblances existed in the story of his love, in the description of its transports and later bitterness, he alone could know. He knew, moreover, that the real Lucretia did not die of self-sacrifice. By a refined and calculating cruelty he was entrusted with the proofs of the book. Even this he bore with fortitude,

for the durability of the association was in his eyes all that redeemed it, and all that could give him self-respect.

In the event it was Charles—weak and ailing—who died, not Lucretia.

The heroic remedy did not succeed; Chopin resisted even "Lucretia Floriani." The rupture happened later, and its cause was the rudeness of Lucretia towards some third person. Chopin, who bore his own injuries silently, became angry when others were injured, and this wrath afforded a pretext for the rupture longed for. Two leaflets out of Chopin's album may be read as symbols of two great sorrows of his life, one the sketch of Warsaw, the other an avowal of eternal love for Lucretia. One of these feelings caused the sorrows of a whole life to be reflected in his musical productions, the other caused his death. Chopin possessed too much pride to be annihilated without an effort; he composed, threw himself into art, seeking solace and revival, he tried to escape from memory, to regain his equilibrium; but in vain. Weakened by sickness, shaken by pain,

his health began to fail, and he showed alarming symptoms. Incidents of the year 1848 irritated him so much that his stay in Paris became harmful to his health, and departure was necessary.

Some Scotch ladies, enthusiastic admirers of his music, kindly invited him to stay with them. There were, besides this, brilliant offers of engagements for concerts in England. So Chopin went to England, and passed almost a whole year there, the last but one of his life, and he left sad, ill, discouraged, indifferent to everything. Traces of this disposition are visible in his letters. Here is, for example, one written to his friend, Albert Grzymala.

"I played at a concert in Glasgow, where a number of notables were gathered together to hear me. But to-day I am already low-spirited. Fog! And though out of the window at which I am writing I have the most beautiful view under my nose of Stirling Castle, the same as in the days of Robert Bruce, do you remember, and mountains and lakes, and a charming park, in a word, one of the best known and most

beautiful views in Scotland, yet I see it sometimes only when it pleases the fog to lift for a few minutes, for the sun does not avail much against it here. Before long I shall forget Polish, I shall talk in French in the English way, and I shall learn English in the Scotch fashion. If I do not complain in writing to you it is not because you will not condole with me, since you are the only one that knows mine all, but if I once begin there will be no end to it, and always the same. I am wrong to say always the same, as it is always worse concerning the future with me. I feel weaker, I cannot compose anything, not so much for want of will as for physical obstacles, as I tumble every week over a different branch. But what am I to do? Besides, this saves me a few coppers for the winter."

He found England during the winter absolutely insupportable. This is how he describes his life: —

"I am up to nothing the whole morning, and then, when I am dressed, I pant until dinner, after which one must sit for two hours with

the other gentlemen at table, and look how they talk, and listen how they drink. Wearied to death, thinking of something different from what they do, I go to the drawing-room, where the whole strength of the soul is required, in order to revive a little, as they are all anxious to hear me play. After that my good Daniel carries me up the stairs to my bed-room, undresses me, lays me down, leaves me a candle, and I am free to lie panting and dreaming until the morning, when just the same round will begin again. And when I have grown a little used to the place I must go somewhere else, as my Scotchwomen do not leave me in peace, only come to fetch me, or drive me about on visits to members of their family. They will choke me with kindness, and I shall not resist them through politeness."

Sometimes a ray of mirth will pierce like a flash of wit through his melancholy. Another time time he describes how he went to the opera in London, where Jenny Lind sang for the first time, and the Queen appeared for the first time after a long absence.

"Both made a great sensation, even old Wellington, who, like an old monarchical dog in its shed, sat in front of his Royal mistress. I got acquainted with Jenny Lind; what a Swedish character."

But discouragement and discord are more frequent.

"I am going to Manchester, where I am to give a grand concert. I am to play twice, without orchestra. Alboni will be there, but this is nothing to me; I shall sit down and shall play. But what I shall do afterwards I do not know. If I could know, at least, that illness will not prostrate me here in the winter."

In another letter the sufferer complains that he played at a concert, and gives orders that a lodging may be sought for him:—

"Wherefore do I trouble myself with all this? I do not know, as I do not wish for anything; but I suppose I ought to think about myself, therefore do help me in this matter."

And afterwards the remembrance of the fatal love returns:

"I never cursed anyone, but everything feels

already so insupportable to me that I fancy I should feel easier if I could curse Lucretia. But surely they also suffer there, and suffer the more, for they grow old in wickedness."

And then again later: —

"They grieve unnecessarily for me at home. I cannot grieve, neither rejoice any more. I have entirely exhausted my feelings. I only vegetate and wait that it may end sooner."

It was to end at no distant date: —

"On Thursday," he writes in his last letter from England, "I depart from this beastly London. I have, besides the usual things, neuralgia. Order Pleyel to send me any piano on Thursday evening; order it to be covered, and give orders to buy a bunch of violets, that it may perfume the salon" (flowers, if possible violets, he had to have always in the room); "so I may yet have some poetry at home on my return when passing the room to my dormitory, where surely I shall lay me down for a long time. Then Friday evening I am in Paris. One day more here and I shall go mad; no, I shall perish! My Scotchwomen so dreary—

may the Divine hand preserve them; but as they have stuck to me, impossible to tear them away; order a fire, a warming, dusting, for perhaps I may recover."

After his return to Paris he lived only a few months, amidst continual and increasing suffering. Only towards the end some deceptive wish for life, and the hope of it, awoke, and many future plans were arranged. He took some new apartments (Place Vendôme), in which he took interest, and arranged for himself with great expense; everything was to be pretty and comfortable, as if he expected his apartment would last him for a long time.

He was three weeks in it. On the 15th of October, 1849, a change for the worse took place. A consultation of physicians was held; the sufferer insisted on Doctor Blache being called (one of the most celebrated physicians for children's illnesses). "He will help me most, as there is something of a child in me." No one could help him, for they all concurred that there was no help. After the physicians, a priest was called in—the Rev. Jelowicki—

MICKIEWICZ.

who heard Chopin's last confession and administered the last sacraments. Death did not come immediately but was expected a long time with the feeling that it might come at any moment. His nearest friends were with him in the sick room for three days and two nights, including his sister, and in the next room, a crowd representing the whole musical and *emigré* world of Paris, who, hearing that Chopin was dying, wished to see him and take a last farewell. He ordered them all to be let into his room, conversed very amiably, and took a special farewell of each one, just as if he were going on a journey. He saw death before him, but looked into its eyes peacefully and courageously.

One of his friends and admirers, who had great musical talents and a highly admired voice, Countess Delphine Potocka, being absent from Paris hastened, on receiving the news of his danger, to see and take leave of him. He wished to hear her sing once more. She sang a certain Aria of Bellini's ("Beatrice di Tenda," probably). He gave his last orders in

perfect consciousness. He begged his sisters to burn all his inferior compositions. "I owe it to the public," he said, "and to myself to publish only good things. I kept to this resolution all my life; I wish to keep to it now."

All Chopin's papers, his piano, his portrait by Ary Schaeffer, were burnt in Warsaw in 1863, at the destruction of the Zamoyski's palace. In one of the apartments lived a sister of the artist, the possessor of this his legacy. Her apartment was ruined and these souvenirs burnt in the courtyard of the palace.

The last night but one was a very bad one, and he suffered terribly. In the morning, quite unexpectedly, he felt rather better. On this he said: "This is bad, as it attaches me to life and I ought to tear myself away from it now." But after this reflection the thought returned of what was the text and the charm of his life —music. "You will play in memory of me," he said to friends the dearest to him and the greatest comrades in music, "and I will hear you from beyond." Franchomme, his nearest friend and helper in composition, with whom

he wrote his sonata for piano and violoncello, answered him, "Well, we will play your Sonata." "Oh, no, not mine, play really good music, Mozart, for instance." Mozart's music was always to him the ideal. Shortly afterwards he exclaimed, "I am going to die!" The doctor tried to deny this. "Do not disturb me," was the answer, "it is a great favour when God permits us to see beforehand the moment of death. He has granted this to me; do not make my thoughts wander."

He suffered very much and complained occasionally. "Why do I suffer so? If it were in a battle I should understand it, because I could serve as an example to others; but to die so miserably on my bed—how can my suffering benefit anyone?"

He preserved to the last full consciousness and calm speech. He wished to drink. They raised him from his pillows; then he put one arm round the friend who gave him the water and expired; it was 17th October, 1849, at three o'clock in the morning.

His friends had a beautiful idea. They

wished on accompanying him to his grave to play his own music by way of farewell, and at the obsequies his Funeral March, arranged for an orchestra, was played.

One of his last creations was a mazourka—the last of his mazourkas, op. 63, and the Polonaise Fantasie, which after depicting pictures of battles and fights ends with a bold and assured hymn of triumph. Like poetry, the music of Chopin is the flower of romanticism. Not only because as a composer he belongs to the school of romanticism, but, much more, because his music has the same charm, the same character, and the same failings as our romantic poetry; it has, like that poetry, the highest tenderness of sentiment; it has originality, and a great richness of forms and ideas; it has also much vivacity and colouring of imagination, and in that imagination there is something veiled, ethereal and undefined. alike through sensitive feeling and patriotic inspiration. It has faults; an overstrained melancholy; a great want of equanimity, and an interior discord that appears in thoughts

PRINCESS MARCELINE CZARTORYSKA.

Photo by Mien, Cracow.

which are sometimes incomprehensible in a strange and sometimes eccentric execution. And as the poet, under the influence of the conquest of Poland in 1831 and emigration, gave to the country the most beautiful works, so the musician, under the influence of the same feeling, produces the highest inspirations, and the most Polish, in spirit and form, and, after a whole lifetime of sadness and yearning ends, like the other, with the chord of confidence and hope.

THE END.

LIST OF PORTRAITS.

CHOPIN *(frontispiece)*

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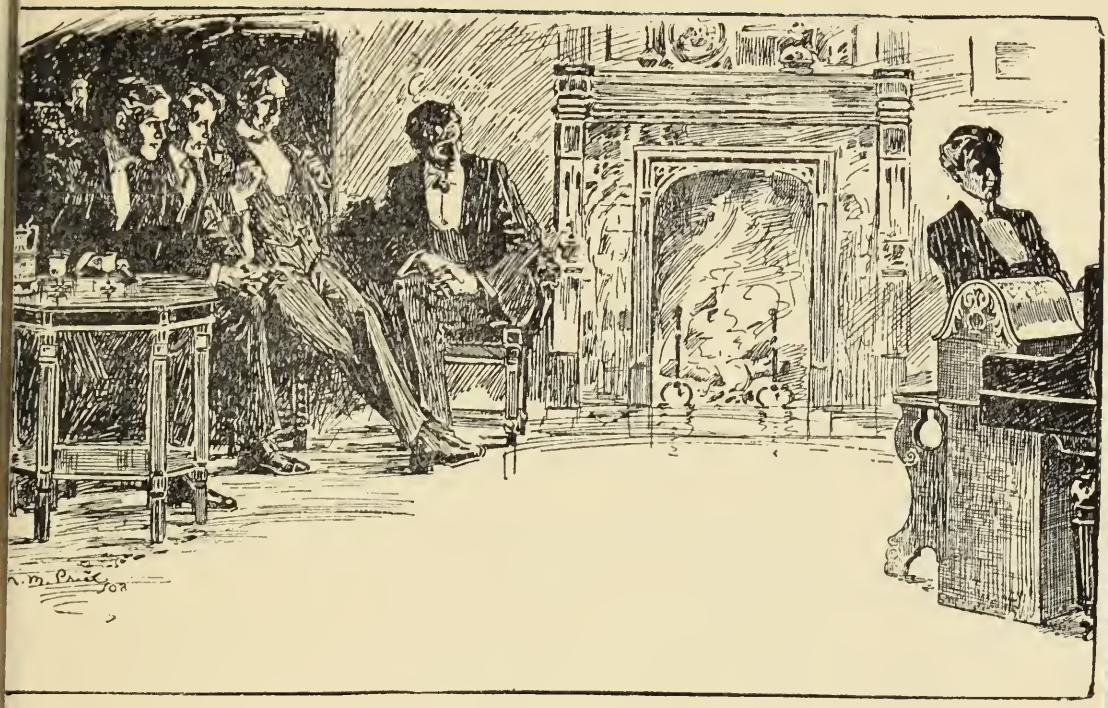

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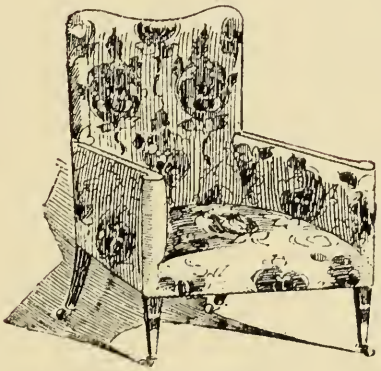

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